DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 685 EC 221 253

AUTHOR Jones, Sheila Dove; Stegelin, Dolores A.
TITLE Ohio Preschool Special Education Interagency Collaboration Grant. Final Report: Year One.
INSTITUTION Cincinnati Univ., OH. Dept. of Early Childhood/Special Education.
SPONS AGENCY Ohio State Dept. of Education, Columbus. Early Childhood Section.
PUB DATE Oct 88
GRANT 046375-PG-S2-88
NOTE 94p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; *Cooperative Planning; *Coordination; Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; *Educational Cooperation; Inservice Teacher Education; *Institutional Cooperation; Needs Assessment; Preschool Education; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio

ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this grant project was to develop a resource manual on interagency collaboration training for preschool personnel responsible for providing early childhood special education programs in Ohio. The project's first year activities included a literature review and a statewide survey upon which to base the manual. The literature review identified definitions and goals of collaboration, characteristics of interagency collaboration, forces behind collaborative efforts, group dynamics and processes, restraining forces in collaboration, and problems with interagency agreements and their solutions. The literature review led to development of a survey of Ohio service providers of the 3-to-5-year-old early childhood special education population. A total of 1,075 surveys were mailed; 300 were returned, representing a 28% return rate. Data analysis assessed current status of preschool interagency collaboration in four groups of respondents: total group; respondents reporting successful collaboration; respondents from public schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation programs; and respondents who had received Ohio Curriculum Training. The one factor identified as most helpful in preschool interagency collaboration was networking with other persons or agencies, followed by having a common goal/child-family focus, and receiving support services from technical assistance programs. Respondents were also asked to indicate essential factors for collaboration, inhibiting factors in collaboration, inter/intra-agency communication strategies, strategies for conflict resolution, and training needs. A list of 34 references is included. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED311685

OHIO PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION GRANT

FINAL REPORT: YEAR ONE

October, 1988

Grant Director: John Gossett, Director
Hopewell Special Education Regional Resource Center
5799 West New Market Road
Hillsboro, OH 45133

Report Prepared by Grant Coordinators: Sheila Dove Jones, Ed. D.
Dolores A. Stegelin, Ph. D.
Department of Early Childhood/ Special Education
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0002

Funding Source: Ohio Department of Education
Early Childhood Section
65 South Front Street, Room 202
Columbus, OH 43266-0308
Grant Project #046375-PG-S2-88

EC 221253

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Karen E. Sadusa
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ABSTRACT..... v

INTRODUCTION..... 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE..... 3

STATEWIDE SURVEY..... 31

IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 76

References..... 82

LIST OF TABLES

Table I Population Areas..... 34

Table 2 Agency Representation..... 35

Table 3 Interagency Collaboration Background..... 37

Table 4.1 The One Factor Identified as Most Helpful in Collaboration - Total Group of Respondents..... 41

Table 4.2 The One Factor Identified as Most Helpful in Collaboration - Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 42

Table 4.3 The One Factor Identified as Most Helpful in Collaboration - Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 43

Table 4.4 The One Factor Identified as Most Helpful in Collaboration - Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 44

Table 5.1 Essential Factors for Collaboration- Total Group of Respondents. 46

Table 5.2 Essential Factors for Collaboration- Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 47

Table 5.3 Essential Factors for Collaboration- Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 48

Table 5.4 Essential Factors for Collaboration- Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 49

Table 6.1 Inhibiting Factors in Collaboration- Total Group of Respondents..... 51

Table 6.2 Inhibiting Factors in Collaboration- Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 52

Table 6.3 Inhibiting Factors in Collaboration- Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 53

Table 6.4 Inhibiting Factors in Collaboration- Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 54

Table 7.1 Inter/Intra-agency Communication Strategies - Total Group of Respondents..... 56

Table 7.2 Inter/Intra-agency Communication Strategies - Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 57

Table 7.3 Inter/Intra-agency Communication Strategies - Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 58

Table 7.4 Inter/Intra-agency Communication Strategies - Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 59

Table 8.1 Helpfulness of Communication Strategies - Total Group of Respondents..... 60

Table 8.2 Helpfulness of Communication Strategies - Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 61

Table 8.3 Helpfulness of Communication Strategies - Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 62

Table 8.4 Helpfulness of Communication Strategies - Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 63

Table 9.1 Strategies for Conflict Resolution- Total Group of Respondents..... 64

Table 9.2 Strategies for Conflict Resolution- Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 65

Table 9.3 Strategies for Conflict Resolution- Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 66

Table 9.4 Strategies for Conflict Resolution- Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 67

Table 10.1 Helpfulness of Conflict Resolution Strategies - Total Group of Respondents..... 68

Table 10.2 Helpfulness of Conflict Resolution Strategies - Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 69

Table 10.3 Helpfulness of Conflict Resolution Strategies - Public Schools with Preschools..... 69

Table 10.4 Helpfulness of Conflict Resolution Strategies - Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 70

Table 11.1 Areas of Training Needs in Interagency Collaboration - Total Group of Respondents..... 71

Table 11.2 Areas of Training Needs in Interagency Collaboration - Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration..... 72

Table 11.3 Areas of Training Needs in Interagency Collaboration - Public Schools with Preschool Programs..... 73

Table 11.4 Areas of Training Needs in Interagency Collaboration - Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training..... 74

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this research was to conduct a statewide survey on preschool special education interagency collaboration. The survey sample consisted of service providers of the 3 to 5 year old early childhood special education population in Ohio. Survey results were utilized to determine the contents for resource training manuals on interagency collaboration in conjunction with the implementation of P.L. 99-457 in Ohio public schools.

A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted and is included in this report. A total of 1,075 statewide surveys were mailed to agencies and public schools providing services to preschool children. Analysis of the data consisted of looking at four different respondent groups. Findings were utilized to develop two resource manuals on preschool special education interagency collaboration for use by public schools in Ohio.

The funding source for this research was the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, Columbus, Ohio.

PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION PROJECT

Introduction

In the fall of 1987, the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood, initiated early childhood special education grant competitions in the areas of personnel preparation, interagency collaboration, program design, research, and dissemination. The Preschool Special Education Interagency Collaboration Grant was awarded to Mr. John Gossett, Director of Hopewell Special Education Regional Resource Center. As director of the grant, Mr. Gossett facilitated the implementation of grant activities with the cooperation and collaboration of the SERRC Consortium, comprised of Hopewell, Miami Valley, Southwestern and West Central Ohio SERRC's. Dr. Sheila Dove Jones and Dr. Dolores A. Stegelin, University of Cincinnati, Department of Early Childhood and Special Education, served as grant coordinators. Grant personnel worked in conjunction with Department of Health personnel to assure that the products resulting from this project complemented and supplemented the Ohio Curriculum Model (Ohio Department of Health and Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 1987), a successful collaboration training model.

Purpose of the Grant

The primary goal of the Preschool Special Education Interagency Collaboration Grant was to develop a resource manual to be used to provide interagency collaboration training to school personnel responsible for implementing and providing early childhood special education programs for children, ages 3 through 5. The focus of the first year's activities involved research to obtain information upon which the resource manual would be founded. Two approaches were to collect foundation data and included: 1) identification and analysis of recognized models of collaboration through an extensive literature review; and 2) a statewide survey of existing public and private agencies and facilities providing early childhood special education programs or services. The findings of the literature and statewide survey are discussed in this report along with implications for future training of early childhood special education personnel in the area of interagency collaboration.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATION

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Definition of Collaboration

Several different terms or phrases for collaboration have been defined in the literature. Gans and Horton (1975) used the phrase "social services integration" to mean "the linking together by various means of the services of two or more service providers to allow treatment of an individual's or family's needs in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner" (p. 3). The term "interagency coordination" was defined by Morse (1981) as "a process of utilizing existing resources for a specific purpose to attain a specific goal..." (p. 10).

Three types of interagency relationships were defined by Crawford and Leadley (1978) and included pluralism (characterized by the independent functioning of each agency), fusion (characterized by two or more agencies merging and resulting in a relationship based on integration and a new identity) and coordination/collaboration (characterized as a form that is midway between the two extremes of pluralism and fusion.) Collaboration may be informal or formal (Morse, 1981.) The participants of informal collaborative efforts usually rely on the mutual desire and commitment for the betterment of services for children and families. Control rests with the participants as they jointly determine procedures for interagency communication and activities. Formal collaboration usually

involves formal procedures such as written agreements, administrative policies and regulations. The control rests more with a central authority figure that delegates responsibilities downward in a single line of command as opposed to the shared authority of less formal collaborative processes.

Goals of Collaboration

Interagency collaboration can be conceived of as having two broad goals: (1) to improve the delivery of services to individuals, and (2) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery systems (Zeller, 1980). Within the service delivery system their goals can be addressed by strategies that target the system, i.e. promoting policy change and reorganization, and by other strategies that target the particular mix of services provided to individuals.

The rationale for interagency collaboration cited in the literature is clear. Hall (1980) identifies the following principles/rationale related to developing a model for collaboration:

1. Effective coordination of services among agencies provides an effective continuum of services for the consumer.
2. Effective interagency collaboration reduces duplication in services and cost of services.
3. Effective interagency collaboration expands the resource knowledge and appreciation of the service providers.
4. Effective collaboration reduces the time and energy that

consumers must devote to obtaining effective services (p. 55).

Although the rationale for coordinated services is strong, interagency collaboration is not without challenges to service providers. For example, a dilemma facing any new early childhood collaborative project is the identification and location of eligible children for screening, assessment, and intervention programs (Davis, 1977). A primary goal of many collaborative efforts is to first organize an array of resources to establish a comprehensive system of identifying handicapped and at-risk children for screening programs, which in itself can be a monumental task. Yet, as challenges such as this are overcome, effective collaborative screening procedures lead to appropriate referrals and services to agencies and programs for children and their families.

Historical Perspective

Interagency planning was previously approached on a voluntary basis, to be undertaken after the more essential business of the day was completed. However, comprehensive planning and services implementation has been markedly affected by developments at both state and national levels in statutory, judicial, fiscal and policy areas (Martinson, 1982). As a result of these developments, a mandatory base for interagency program planning has been established. Primary intervention must be provided by those in the health, education and social service

fields who are trained to deal effectively with developmentally delayed and disabled children (Magrab & Schmidt, 1980).

The initial concern for the preparation of early childhood special education teachers with expertise in working with other disciplines occurred as early as 1968 as a result of Public Law 90-35, Education Professions Development Act (Weintraub, 1968). Universities and colleges with preparation programs for preschool special education personnel incorporated competencies that focused on the understanding of other disciplines as well as auxiliary personnel, e.g. pediatricians, nurses, social workers.

Early childhood collaboration has evolved during the 1970's and continues to mature in the 1980's. The passage of legislation at the federal (P.L. 94-142 and P.L. 99-457) and state levels has increased the emphasis on the need for interagency cooperation and collaboration in order to provide comprehensive services for young children and their families. Services to children with handicaps have traditionally been fragmented. The public's sometimes limited understanding of the needs of handicapped children has resulted in policy decisions that have generated piecemeal programs without regard to programs already in place or the manner in which services are organized and delivered. Thus, services to special needs children are provided in both <u>functional</u> (mental health, education, social services) and <u>categorical</u> (mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped) areas (Audette, 1980).

These approaches to serving, or not serving, children with handicaps have resulted in systems with sharply defined areas of agency responsibility and with correspondingly difficult problems in achieving interagency collaboration (Elder & Magrab, 1980).

Early efforts to accomplish interagency planning are documented in the literature. Interagency collaboration has received particular attention during the past five years as a process through which community resources can be amalgamated (Elder & Magrab, 1980). The growth of interagency agreements between vocational rehabilitation and special education agencies in the 1960's provides an example of how cooperative agreements have been used to improve the delivery system. Students who entered special education in the 1950's were reaching secondary school age by 1960. Since public school personnel had little experience delivering services to handicapped students and lacked the resources needed to establish vocational education programs, they relied heavily on on-the-job training as a means of preparing handicapped persons for employment. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1965 (Public Law 333) expanded the authorization for state rehabilitation agencies to provide extended services for mentally retarded individuals. Thus, the special education vocational rehabilitation cooperative movement agreement was used to meet the needs of both agencies to improve services (Baxter, 1982).

The term "services integration" was first formally mentioned

in 1971 in a policy memorandum by Eliot Richardson, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Humm-Delgado, 1980). As new programs and services for handicapped and at-risk children developed, interagency collaboration became exceedingly important, particularly as transition from one agency program to another occurred for children and families. In response to these transitional concerns, Greene and Pirtle (1982) designed a model to ease the transition for handicapped children from Head Start programs to public school settings. A major focus of this model was the facilitation of basic understanding of service providers of each agency's programming, eligibility, criteria, guidelines, mandates, and documentation needs. According to Hanson (1985), the area of early childhood special education offers the greatest range of service models, including home-based models, public school classrooms, parent involvement programs and programs with a medical focus.

Case study findings indicate that there is no best model to follow for services integration, although services integration usually results in increased accessibility, continuity, and efficiency (Elder & Magrab, 1980; Gans & Horton, 1975; Olsen, 1983). The development of the various facets of successful interagency collaboration requires varying periods of time (Gans & Horton, 1975). According to Humm-Delgado (1980), many variables contribute to successful integration of services including:

1. Fiscal linkages such as joint budgeting, joint findings, fund transfer, and purchase of services.
2. Personnel linkages, such as consolidated administration, joint use of staff, staff transfers, staff outstationing and co-location.
3. Planning and programming linkages, such as joint planning, development of policies programming, sharing of information and evaluation.
4. Support services linkages, such as record-keeping, grantsmanship, and central support services.
5. Core services linkages, such as outreach, intake, diagnosis, referral and follow-up.
6. Case coordination linkages, such as case conferences, case coordinators and case team. (p. 164)

Characteristics of Interagency Collaboration

Interagency behavior has many characteristics. Among the most dominant are these: (a) power, (b) conflict, (c) cooperation and (d) economic utility (Steingraph, 1977). Power relationships within agencies determine the ability of the agency to respond and to develop. Conflict is inevitable in human services (Elder & Magrab, 1980).

Cooperation refers to the willingness to work together for mutual benefit of the child. Naturally, a high level of cooperation is required to achieve interagency working relationships. Economic utility refers to the calculation of

costs and benefits by individuals and organizations relative to interagency working relationships (Elder & Magrab, 1980). Economic utility is difficult to determine because initial results are not obvious. Sharing these economic benefits does require time on the parts of the agency staff. Change in policy can also result in at least temporary turmoil until new policies are clearly established.

Gans and Horton (1975) conducted a thorough analysis of thirty projects to determine the factors that lead to the integration of social services. The outcome of this analysis indicated that social service integration or collaboration was more likely to occur if: a) the sociopolitical leadership in the locality wants it to happen; b) when integration is a high-priority objective of the project; c) when the project director aggressively pursues coordination and has good contacts with important actors in the process; and d) service providers have strong incentives to cooperate.

Forces Behind Collaborative Efforts

The establishment of collaborative efforts has evolved from the following forces: 1) pressures from clients, parents and advocates; 2) federal and state initiatives; 3) economic pressures; 4) the need to reduce duplication of services; 5) continued development of new and improved treatment strategies; 6) need for additional comprehensive services; 7)

inter/intraprofessional pressures, based on the need for continuing education; 8) fragmented service delivery systems; 9) overlap in service definitions; 10) multiple planning and funding bodies; and 11) varying models for service delivery (Johnson, McLaughlin, & Christensen, 1982; Kazuk, 1980).

GROUP DYNAMICS AND PROCESSES

Successful preschool interagency collaboration requires the formation and maintenance of groups. The nature of interagency collaboration usually includes eclectic individuals in the process of planning and evaluation of intervention programs for young children and their families. Because group formation and maintenance is essential to comprehensive service delivery, this section of the literature review focuses on group dynamics and processes, as well as leadership characteristics.

Bertcher (1979) defines a group as: "a dynamic social entity composed of two or more individuals interacting interdependently in relation to one or more common goals that are valued by its members, so that each member influences and is influenced by every other member, to some degree, through face to face communication. Over time, if the individuals who comprise the group continue to assemble, they tend to develop a means for determining who is and who is not a member, statuses and roles for members, and values and norms that regulate behavior of consequences to the group" (p. 14).

Perhaps another way to examine what an effective group is,

is to ask the following questions:

1. When is a group not a group?
2. When do individuals lack clarity or lack essential components to form a group?

Bertcher (1979) explains that a successful group is composed of two or more individuals who do interact over time in relation to one or more goals that are valued by each of these individuals. Also, a degree of dependency on each other is required as group members try to achieve common goals. Criteria for membership are clearly stated, well-known and generally accepted.

Interdependence in the Successful Group

Successful group dynamics include two kinds of interdependent behaviors: 1) task behaviors that are related to goal achievement; and 2) socioemotional behaviors that are related to maintaining harmonious relations among members while they work to achieve goals.

Bertcher (1979) lists the following as task behaviors: 1) giving suggestions or direction or implying autonomy for others; 2) giving opinion, evaluation, or analysis or expressing feelings or wishes; 3) giving orientation or information or repeating, clarifying, or confirming; 4) asking for opinion, evaluation, or analysis or expressing feeling; 5) asking for suggestion, direction or possible ways to act. Bertcher (1979) also lists the following as positive socioemotional behaviors: 1) showing solidarity; 2) showing tension release, joking,

laughing and showing satisfaction; 3) agreeing, showing promise, acceptance or understanding, concurring, complying.

Negative socioemotional behaviors are identified as disagreeing, showing passive rejection, formality, withholding help, showing tension, asking for help, showing antagonism, deflating other's status, and defending or asserting self. It is essential for group maintenance that members not devote all of their interaction to goal achievement and fail to pay attention to the conflicts, hurt feelings, and tension that are a natural part of problem solving. If this occurs, some members will find the group attractive and leave or cease active participation (Bertcher, 1979).

Information Seeking and Giving

Information seeking is an attempt to add new information (facts and knowledge) to what you already know. This can be accomplished by asking a group member questions about himself or herself; what he/she knows or thinks are the facts about a particular issue, situation, or event. Information seeking refers only to those questions that are related to an individual's perception of facts rather than feelings or opinions.

Information giving involves giving the group what the information giver thinks are facts or knowledge available about the topic on which the group is working. Information giving can be used to solve problems, to get to know group members, to

achieve clarity in communication, and to give feedback. Guidelines for management of seeking and giving information include: 1) encourage members to seek and give information rather than all questions being asked by the leader; 2) use familiar, simple language and deal with only one question/fact at a time; 3) avoid "yes" or "no" answers; 4) state the reasons or need to know the information; 5) use a natural tone of voice so as not to discourage further questions or clarification.

Attending

An important aspect of group dynamics is attending. Attending can be defined as letting a group participant know that you are paying close attention to what she/he is saying or doing so that she/he will be encouraged to continue (Bertcher, 1979). Attending should be used when you want a group member to continue talking or doing what she/he is doing so that more information can be obtained or better rapport can be built.

Attending can be accomplished in the following ways: 1) relax and be comfortable so that you do not exude pressure on the group participants; 2) look at the person you are focusing on and occasionally give eye contact to others in the group; 3) turn toward the person you are attending, lean forward in your chair, nod, smile and be encouraging; 4) let the person know you are listening by verbalizing such comments as "right", "I understand" and "I see"; 5) ask the individual to restate when you are not sure you understand what he/she has said; 6) do not pay too much

attention to one or two persons and neglect the others. Scan the group often so that you can have eye contact with every group member.

Attending is successful if all group members feel free to participate, if you are getting additional, useful information, and if members do not have to be forceful or dramatic to get the attention of others.

Summarizing

Summarizing is the process of drawing together and briefly restating a number of prior responses into one statement, then seeking agreement or correction from the group members until a summary statement has been produced that everyone considers accurate.

Summarizing can be used effectively in these ways: 1) starting a meeting from the same point of reference; 2) clarifying an issue that seems to be confusing; 3) keeping a discussion in step so that needless repetition does not occur; 4) making a transition from one topic to another; 5) concluding a meeting and drawing together what has been said or done in order to compare it with the goals of the meeting and lay the basis for the next meeting.

Leadership Traits in Collaboration: The Human Factor

The most critical coordination variable in interagency collaboration is the intangible human factor (Hall, 1980). In an earlier era the human factor was abundantly apparent at all

levels and communication among consumers and providers in the social services and the helping professions. The loss of the human factor in the service coordination and delivery process is more a function of commission than omission. The loss of this human factor is primarily the result of conscious or unconscious behaviors, policies, and organizational structures that have been developed that impede its influence.

Both consumers and providers have experienced a loss of individual identity. Hall (1980), cites examples of policies that reflect the many shifts in values during recent years as the following:

> 1) movement from a defined, select group of clientele to a larger service base; 2) movement from judgment based on individually expressed service needs towards judgment based upon categories of service needs relative to incidence counts; 3) changes from services delivered through private practitioners or small private service agencies towards services delivered through larger public agencies or purchased by public monies; 4) changes from an emphasis upon individual dignity and desires toward policies favoring group or mass quality; 5) movement from programs managed by service-oriented professionals trained in human value systems and ethics to programs administered by business and fiscal avenues; 6) changes from a culture placing responsibility for morality and values upon individuals

> toward a culture placing such responsibility in organization, procedures and courts; 7) from a culture valuing independence, individuality and the inherent responsibility of human risk toward a culture valuing dependency and decreased opportunity for individual judgment and related risk; 8) change from a culture with a highly humanistic value system toward a culture placing increased emphasis on individual isolation from the broader spectrum of human concern; 9) from a culture that places responsibility for the instilling of social values in children within the family toward a culture that places the responsibility for such guidance within the school system and other institutions; and 10) change from a culture that respects the coordination between individual judgments and risk toward a culture that is tending to remove both judgment and risk from the individual by mandate within public agencies. (p. 47)

Hall (1980) states that one of the primary ingredients in effectively engaging the human factor in interagency collaboration is to recognize initially those areas for which an agency is recognized or known. Sensitivity and interpersonal skills are required in order to carry this out effectively. Leadership qualities of the group or team leader must include this sensitivity for others. According to Fitch (1981), experience has shown that the agencies that provide the most important and

efficient cooperative efforts are the ones that maintain the personal touch. Even in rural communities where great distances may be present between agencies, participants in the collaborative process must avoid becoming too immersed in paperwork and politics and must personally meet face-to-face with others striving for the betterment of programs and services.

Trust

A basic variable in diminishing the human factor is the erosion of trust. As the involvement of individuals in the service process has decreased, so has the level of trust. Reintroducing trust into the collaborative process is also a reintroduction of risk. The extension of trust requires a loss or a sense of "giving up" something. The more traditional relationship between the consumer and the provider implied an extension of trust and respect and an assumption of relevant risk on the part of the consumer toward the service provider. However, the shift toward expanded public responsibility for problems and more comprehensive mandates has contributed to the increased imbalance in this relationship.

Decision-making has shifted from the consumer (or family) to the agency and case manager. This has placed an additional burden on the agencies and agency personnel. It also might be questioned whether these responsibilities really can be assumed as adequately by agency personnel. Traditionally, family members were able to provide a higher level of care, monitoring and concern than could

an agency staff person.

Determining Community Needs and Concerns

Communities vary a great deal in size, ethnic make up, values, and traditions. The recent federal mandate to place programs for handicapped preschool children in the public school sector has had a major impact on nearly every community across the United States. Determining each community's individual needs and concerns is a first step toward successful collaboration. This requires of the responsible agency the ability to network effectively within the community, identify key players and decision makers, develop strategies to gather updated information about the population of the community, and to survey the population in a representative fashion in order to learn what the needs and concerns of families are in the provision of services for young children who are in need of specialized, coordinated services.

Ysseldyke (1985) completed a statewide survey to determine the current screening and diagnostic practices for identifying young handicapped children in the state of Minnesota. A three-page survey form was developed to obtain information on ages of children screened, agency services, agencies, and professionals to which children were referred, opinions about gaps or duplications in services for preschool children and the tools/procedures, staff members, and criteria used for screening and for diagnostic assessment. Through this "current practice survey", the gaps and

duplications in screening, diagnostics, and treatment became apparent and the data collected "set the stage" for determining the kinds of collaborative efforts and services that needed to be developed in Minnesota.

Mulvenon (1980) stated that community needs and concerns are centered on the following:

1. Anticipation that the school-age mandate would be extended below the age of 5.
2. Financial problems among some developmental centers to the extent that they might have to close.
3. If there were a preschool mandate that other agencies would terminate services.
4. Recognition that a preschool handicapped child should receive services when diagnosed.
5. Recognition that services to preschool handicapped children need to be expanded and improved.
6. The opportunity to develop and implement a truly local plan rather than a state-imposed plan.

If community resistance exists, which certainly may be the case in communities where services are limited or resources are scarce, the most reliable approach is to plant seeds of public awareness through the community meeting or special interest groups and then wait to see if an awareness, and interest, develops (Hall, 1980). Local preschool interagency team members from other communities can provide on-site assistance and

consultation to the emerging preschool interagency teams. These support team members add credibility to the new interagency process.

Restraining Forces in Collaboration

In an analysis of thirty projects to determine factors contributing to social service integration and collaboration, Gans and Horton (1975) found that service integration was less likely to occur when: a) the local leadership opposes change; b) when the integrator is so burdened by service delivery responsibilities and internal operations that he has no time to pursue coordination; c) when the project fails to define its mission as the development of integrative linkages; d) when service providers actively protect the status quo, jealously guarding their prerogatives; e) when the project is poorly administered; and f) when guidelines and polices are unclear and conflicting.

Needless to say, establishing and nurturing early childhood collaboration in the school-community setting requires a great deal of sustained effort and human energy. Developing effective interagency agreements requires considerable effort on the parts of many people. The following variables were found to be barriers to the development of collaborative efforts:

1. Private versus public agency participation.
2. Interpersonal relations between and among planning board members.
3. Disagreement on target populations.

4. Lack of centralized information base.
5. Imprecise definition of agency responsibility and authority.
6. Absence of common procedures for information dissemination.
7. Difficulty in defining decision making rules among developers.
8. Fragmented fiscal support for interagency efforts.
9. Confidentiality and transference of records.
10. Absence of provider (classroom teacher, rehabilitation counselor, social worker) acceptance/understanding.
11. Uncertainty of end product.
12. Lack of sustained availability of key people to facilitate.
13. Variability in client eligibility.
14. Resistance to change among agency consumer members.

In addition, several problems can be anticipated during the operation of the collaborative effort. These include: (a) variability and inconsistency in definition of roles and responsibilities of various persons across and within the agency organizational structures; (b) difficulty in identification/selection of professionals to deliver services; and (c) staff turnover--often resulting in key positions filled by individuals not committed to the master plan (Johnson, McLaughlin & Christensen, 1982).

The patchwork quilt of agencies, their eligibility criteria, intake systems, coordination mechanisms, paperwork requirements, and the insulation of agency information under the guise of confidentiality, as well as other factors have made it necessary for advocates of children with handicaps to be highly skilled in order to piece together a program that is responsive to the comprehensive needs of eligible children. For example, in a statewide survey to determine the needs of infants and toddlers in the New York, Toole (1982) found that most programs for preschoolers cooperated with a very limited number of other agencies; however, more collaboration between a varied of agencies would be necessary if appropriate services were to be provided for preschoolers.

Cooperative planning and programming can be inhibited by restraining forces, also. For example, few collaborative interagency inservice training programs exist to support individuals currently involved in collaborative interagency programming, planning, and implementation. Incentives which promote collaborative interagency planning and programming initiatives are few. Also, the complex nature of present delivery systems restricts the degree to which interagency cooperation/coordination may be achieved.

Elder & Magrab (1980) identified a list of problems associated with the development of interagency coordination delivery systems, including the following:

1. Competitiveness of long-established institutions and agencies.
2. Lack of organizational structure to bring agencies together around mutual interests.
3. Myopic perspectives and parochial interests of agencies that restrict their ability to understand the needs of the broader community.
4. Limited experience in the techniques of coordinating service delivery.
5. Complexities of interdisciplinary communication.
6. The difficulty in achieving a focus on the functional role of the system rather than the system design.
7. Lack of staff time to become involved in the collaborative effort.
8. Lack of communication based on such issues as turfdom, jealousy, competition for clients, lack of resources, professional selfishness, time management, and allocation of responsibilities.

Many barriers have been listed. Johnson, McLaughlin and Christensen (1982) state that the greatest barrier of all is probably lack of communication. Ineffective relationships between persons associated with the proposed delivery systems potentially cause the most problems. Proactive programming results in more effective interagency efforts than an agency that is responsible to external pressures such as parent groups, other agencies, and

legislative mandates that suggest a general interagency approach. If accountability for a certain program is placed on a specific agency then it may be difficult to involve other agencies in the collaborative process.

Interagency Agreements: Problems and Solutions

Hall (1980) cites the following pitfalls in interagency agreements:

1. Tendency to communicate too low or too high in the organizational structure.
2. Generating agreements that seem to be competitive among agencies but are not adequately monitored in actual implementation.
3. The consumer is generally last to recognize the shift in agency procedures and the impact related to other agencies.

According to Olsen (1983), interagency agreements involve a specification of relationships between two agencies in one or more of the following areas: 1) needs and standards; 2) resource allocations; and 3) procedures (i.e., child identification, child tracking). As agencies begin to develop interagency agreements, the following listed eight aspects of the process should be considered:

1. Establish a shared awareness of need.
2. Communicate turf gripes openly.
3. Learn the language of the other agency.

4. Analyze mandates and their latitude.
5. Consider involving a facilitator.
6. Clarify content of agreement (i.e., purpose, definition of terms, agreement administration).
7. Plan comprehensively.
8. Dispel fears through careful transition (Olsen, 1983).

In some instances, agencies have developed interagency agreements that pool funding sources in order to improve the quality of services to children and families. Olsen recommended the following procedures for agencies developing joint funding agreements:

1. Define clearly the shared needs.
2. Think and organize as a business.
3. Establish mutual trust and respect for the staff of the respective agencies.
4. Establish a positive program image to make the program highly visible.
5. Involve the community through the use of an advisory committee

Problems of Evaluating the Efficacy of Collaboration

The concept of coordination of services has many different meanings depending on the perceptions of the agency or service provider. Although legal mandates have brought about a national trend and movement for interagency collaboration, the evaluation of the efficacy of interagency coordination efforts is a dilemma

due to the lack of a conceptual framework for interagency collaboration and its multidimensional nature. According to Flynn and Harbin (1987), " a paradigm which is multidimensional, interactional, and developmental is needed so that interagency coordination efforts can be developed and evaluated more accurately" (p.37). The need for such a model is imperative since the type of collaborative model employed may emphasize process or product, immediate results or outcomes may not occur, and the context and environment may greatly differ.

Five dynamic dimensions- climate, resources, policies, people, and process- comprise critical elements of interagency collaboration measured in the evaluation model developed by Flynn and Harbin (1987). Factors constituting climate (attitudes, priorities, support of key decision makers and other) are assessed on a continuum ranging from nonsupportive to entirely supportive. Factors constituting resources (i.e. money, people, facilities) are assessed on a continuum ranging from insufficient to plentiful for supporting collaborative efforts. A continuum range of sparse and conflicting to sufficient and complimentary is used to assess the status of policies, such as laws, regulations, standards, and interagency agreements. The assessment of people focuses on three categories of people including the facilitator/leader, group member, and key decision makers. Each people category is assessed as to the skills possess by the individuals to facilitate the collaborative efforts of individual agencies and the collaborative

group.

According to Flynn and Harbin (1987), " communication, proper planning, and mechanisms for conflict resolution are critical to the proper functioning of the interagency group and can have profound effects, both positive and negatie, on the entire interagency effort" (p. 39). Therefore, the process of interagency collaboration must be assessed from a developmental basis that examines formation, conceptualization, development, and implementation of the collaborative process. Needless to say, the effectiveness of the process is directly and indirectly impacted by the other four dynamic dimensions: climate, resources, policies, and people. As politicians begins to ask critical questions about the cost efficacy of interagency collaboration, interagency collaborative groups must be able to document the products of their efforts by an evaluation plan consisting of summative and formative evaluation that assesses climate, resources, policies, people and process.

Interagency Collaboration in Rural, Urban, and Suburban Communities

The recognition that collaborative groups must be adapted to meet a variety of environmental settings pervades the most recent literature on collaboration (Greene, 1985; Hutinger & Smith-Dickson, 1985; and Threet & Hutinger, 1981). Rural communities commonly lack resources, particularly in the area of transportation, personnel recruitment and medical expertise, which

are usually available in urban or suburban areas (Threet & Hutinger, 1981). The establishment of interagency collaboration efforts in rural communities has many challenges due to the isolation of families and communities, transportation needs of families, decentralization of educational and social service agencies, and the proportionately larger number of school-aged handicapped children. The National Comparative Study Regarding Rural Special Education Delivery Systems Before and After Passage of 94-142, conducted by the OSE-funded National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project addressed several strengths and concerns regarding the function of rural special education cooperative and interagency agreements (Helge, 1980). Data indicated that the substantial increase in preschool screening (394%) and programs for 3- and 4-year-olds (800%) was partial due to improved interagency collaboration efforts (Helge, 1980).

On the other hand, cities and suburban areas commonly struggle with dilemmas associated with issues of membership. Frequently thirty or more agencies could potentially be involved with an urban based collaborative group. Some studies have demonstrated that interagency coordination efforts involving fewer than a dozen agencies are more likely to work than those with more agencies. Consequently, in large urban areas where success may be jeopardized if coordination attempts are not broken down into subgroups, the questions becomes, "What methods maximize involvement on the part of all members?" (Gilbert & Specht, 1977).

In urban areas where individual agencies are very complex, the issue of intra-agency communication is a major concern. Disseminating information regarding collaborative efforts to all factions within large, complex organizations inevitably becomes a significant challenge. Suburban areas, where municipal and county service areas may overlap, face dilemmas in regards to defining the community. In areas of suburban sprawl, municipal agencies may serve one sector, while county and local educational agencies serve still others. The potential for service duplication and service gaps can easily occur.

STATEWIDE SURVEY

Methodology

Survey Development and Field-Testing

An extensive review of the literature was conducted to identify philosophies of interagency collaboration, successful models of interagency collaboration, and research related to process variables such as group dynamics, interpersonal and leadership skills, and inhibitors to successful collaboration. Based on a thorough review of the literature, the following five research questions were developed:

1. What are the essential components for successful interagency collaboration in local school districts in Ohio?
2. What leadership skills should key players possess to facilitate interagency collaboration in local school districts?
3. What are the inhibitors to the process of interagency collaboration in local school districts in Ohio?
4. What procedures do agency personnel employ to enhance interagency collaboration in the areas of: establishment of climate, identification and sharing of resources, inter/intra-agency communication, identification of key people, development of inter/intra-agency policies, establishment and implementation of the collaborative process?

5. What are the perceptions of the respondents regarding their most critical needs for technical assistance in interagency collaboration from the Ohio State Department of Education?

The Special Education Regional Resource Center Consortium, comprised of Hopewell, Miami Valley, West Central, and Southwestern SERRC's, played a significant role in assisting grant coordinators with the development of the statewide survey. Early Childhood Task Force Committees were developed in each SERRC in order to provide feedback and information regarding current interagency collaborative efforts in their communities. A structured interview was conducted with each Early Childhood Task Force Committee. The structured interview consisted of questions related to the five research questions (see Appendix A). Specific responses were written using a nominal group process. The meetings were also tape recorded to validate oral responses. A follow-up phone call survey was conducted with each Early Childhood Task Force Committee member to obtain additional information as well as to validate findings from the group structured interview process (see Appendix B).

Results of the structured interviews with the Early Childhood Task Force Committees were used to construct the first draft of the survey. A second meeting with each Early Childhood Task Force was conducted to obtain specific feedback on the initial draft of the statewide survey. Responses were recorded

and used to make appropriate revisions. The second draft of the statewide survey was evaluated by two external evaluation consultants with expertise in interagency collaboration and research methodology and design (see Appendix C).

Statewide Survey Sample

A total of 1,075 statewide surveys were mailed to Head Start programs, MR/DD programs, licensed day care centers, Ohio Curriculum Collaborative Councils, and chartered public schools with preschool programs, including those that have Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs. A census survey of the Head Start, MRDD programs, public/private preschool programs, public schools with Preschool Incentive Grants/State Foundation Programs, and Ohio Curriculum Collaborative Councils was conducted. A random sample of the approximately 1,400 licensed day care centers was surveyed. Follow-up letters and phone calls were made to nonrespondents. A total of 300 surveys were returned, representing a 28% return rate. A high return rate (50-70%) was obtained from respondents of three key groups/agencies: MR/DD programs, Head Start programs, and chartered public schools with preschool programs, particularly public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs.

Results of Statewide Survey

Data analysis of the statewide survey was conducted in order to assess current status of preschool interagency collaboration

in four distinct groups of respondents: 1) total group of respondents (n=300), 2) respondents reporting successful collaboration (n=148), 3) respondents from public schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation programs (n=19), and 4) respondents who have received Ohio Curriculum training (n=91).

Demographics

Population Area - Respondents were requested to identify their type of population area (rural, urban, suburban). Results for the total group of respondents are as follows:

TABLE I

POPULATION AREAS

Geographic Descriptors	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	94	31.3
Urban	58	19.3
Suburban	71	23.7
Rural and Suburban	8	2.7
Rural and Urban	12	4.0
Rural, Urban, and Suburban	11	3.7
Urban and Suburban	6	2.0
Missing Data	40	13.3
TOTAL	300	100.0

Discussion - It would appear that there is a somewhat equal distribution of geographic locale in rural, suburban, and urban settings among the total groups of respondents.

Type of Agency - Respondents were requested to identify the type of agency they were representing. For the total group of respondents, the following frequencies were reported:

TABLE 2

AGENCY REPRESENTATION

Agency Type	Frequency
Mental Retardation/Developmental Disorders	62
County Board of Education	22
Head Start	44
Social Service Agencies	13
SERRC	2
Licensed Day Care/Preschool	69
Medical Agency	5
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs	19
Other	36

* The total number of respondents equals 300. The above frequency does not equal 300 because several agencies identified themselves in one or more of the above categories.

Discussion - Respondents from three key groups/agencies had a high return rate for the survey (50-70%). These groups were: (a) MR/DD programs, (b) Head Start programs, and (c) public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs. Survey respondents represent a wide array of service providers for young children. The medical community had a small representation (n=5), as did social services (n=13). These data

suggest that current services for handicapped preschoolers in Ohio are being provided by diverse agencies. Successful preschool interagency collaboration was reported by most of the MR/DD programs and the Head Start programs. Return rates for the survey indicated that preschool interagency collaboration is recognized and practiced by such programs as MR/DD programs, Head Start programs, and social services. Preschool interagency collaboration may not be as familiar to day care, preschool/nursery, and medically-related personnel.

Respondents' Interagency Collaboration Background

Four background questions on current preschool interagency collaborative efforts were asked. The results are as follows:

TABLE 3

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION BACKGROUND

Question 1 - Is your agency currently involved in preschool interagency collaboration efforts?

Groups	Yes	No	Missing Data
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)	61.7%	33.7%	4.6%
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)	98.0	2.0	0.0
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)	78.9	21.1	0.0
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)	94.5	5.5	0.0

Question 2 - If yes, approximately, how long has your agency been involved in preschool interagency collaborative efforts?

Groups	1 YR	2 YRS	3 YRS	4YRS+	MISSING DATA
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)	28.0%	10.3%	3.3%	16.5%	41.9%
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)	40.7	17.7	6.1	33.5	2.0
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)	26.4	31.6	10.5	15.9	15.6
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)	48.4	17.6	1.1	27.4	5.5

Question 3 - Do you perceive this collaborative effort to be successful?

Groups	Yes	No	Don't Know	Missing Data
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)	49.3%	2.0%	12.0%	36.7%
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)	73.7	5.3	10.5	10.5
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)	80.2	2.2	12.1	5.5

Question 4 - Has your agency or personnel been involved in the Ohio Curriculum Training Project sponsored by the Department of Health?

Groups	Yes	NO	Don't Know	Missing Data
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)	30.3%	52.0%	9.0%	8.7%
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration	49.3	39.2	8.1	3.4
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)	26.3	47.4	26.3	0.0
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Discussion - Four questions were asked related to current preschool interagency collaboration efforts. Question 1 asked if the agencies were currently involved in preschool interagency collaboration. All four of the comparative groups of respondents indicated they were already involved in preschool interagency collaborative efforts. The highest percentages of involvement were reported by the respondents indicating successful collaboration (98.0%) and the respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (94.5%). These data reflected that a relatively high level of preschool interagency collaboration already exists among service providers. Therefore, school district personnel should draw upon this existing expertise in the formation of interagency collaboration groups.

Respondents from the total survey sample and from the group indicating successful collaboration reported having more years of experience with preschool interagency collaboration. Over 50% of these respondents reported 4+ years of preschool interagency collaboration experience. Respondents with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs and those with Ohio Curriculum Training reported collaborative involvement for 1-2 years.

When asked if these collaborative efforts were perceived to be successful, all four groups reported a relatively high percentage (50%-100%) of success collaboration efforts. This finding suggests that there is a positive perception of preschool

interagency collaboration already. School district personnel will find a rich source of experience in individuals working on Preschool Collaborative Council and established Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs. A positive perception of interagency collaboration already seems to exist and school district personnel will benefit from this existing pool of experienced individuals. These individuals should be identified by school district personnel and should be included in initial interagency efforts as key players.

Respondents were asked if their agency had been involved in the Ohio Curriculum Training Project sponsored by the Department of Health. Only 30.3% of the total sample said "yes", 49.3% of the successful collaborators said "yes", 26.3% of the public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs said "yes", and 100% of the Ohio Curriculum respondents said "yes". These data indicated a need to bring together Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Program participants and Ohio Curriculum Training representatives. These data also indicated that approximately one-half (50%) of the successful collaboration respondents have been involved in the Ohio Curriculum Training. Therefore, successful preschool interagency collaboration seems to exist in settings other than those with personnel having the Ohio Curriculum Training. This finding reinforces the idea that successful preschool interagency collaboration already exists to a relatively high degree in Ohio.

Respondents' Perceptions on the Interagency Collaboration Process

Respondents were requested to identify the one factor that they perceived was most helpful in interagency collaboration. The written responses were categorized into ten descriptors. The data results were as follows:

TABLE 4.1

THE ONE FACTOR IDENTIFIED AS MOST HELPFUL IN COLLABORATION
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Descriptors	Percentage
Identification/sharing of resources and information	* 4.3
Support services from Technical Assistance Programs, SERRC's, Collaborative Councils, & etc.	* 6.0
Personal attributes of personnel and personnel in general	4.0
Open communication and mutual respect	4.0
Commitment to collaborate and cooperate	* 9.7
No opportunity or need to collaborate	1.0
Common goal and child-family focus	* 7.7
Networking with other persons and agencies	*12.7
Funding mandates	2.0
Coordinating services and centralized data base	2.3
Missing Data	43.3
TOTAL	100.0

* The top five choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 4.2

THE ONE FACTOR IDENTIFIED AS MOST HELPFUL IN COLLABORATION
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Descriptors	Percentage
Identification/sharing of resources and information	* 7.4
Support services from Technical Assistance Programs, SERRC's, Collaborative Councils, & etc.	* 8.1
Personal attributes of personnel and personnel in general	5.4
Open communication and mutual respect	6.8
Commitment to collaborate and cooperate	*15.5
No opportunity or need to collaborate	0.0
Common goal and child-family focus	*13.5
Networking with other persons and agencies	*20.3
Funding mandates	4.1
Coordinating services and centralized data base	2.7
Missing Data	16.2
TOTAL	100.0

* The top five choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 4.3

THE ONE FACTOR IDENTIFIED AS MOST HELPFUL IN COLLABORATION
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Descriptors	Percentage
Identification/sharing of resources and information	5.3
Support services from Technical Assistance Programs, SERRC's, Collaborative Councils, & etc.	0.0
Personal attributes of personnel and personnel in general	0.0
Open communication and mutual respect	*10.5
Commitment to collaborate and cooperate	*10.5
No opportunity or need to collaborate	0.0
Common goal and child-family focus	5.3
Networking with other persons and agencies	*15.8
Funding mandates	5.3
Coordinating services and centralized data base	*10.5
Missing Data	36.8
TOTAL	100.0

* The top four choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 4.4

THE ONE FACTOR IDENTIFIED AS MOST HELPFUL IN COLLABORATION
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Descriptors	Percentage
Identification/sharing of resources and information	5.5
Support services from Technical Assistance Programs, SERRC's, Collaborative Councils, & etc.	* 8.8
Personal attributes of personnel and personnel in general	3.3
Open communication and mutual respect	3.3
Commitment to collaborate and cooperate	*15.4
No opportunity or need to collaborate	1.1
Common goal and child-family focus	*14.3
Networking with other persons and agencies	*22.0
Funding mandates	5.5
Coordinating services and centralized data base	3.3
Missing Data	39.5
TOTAL	100.0

* The top four choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - Survey respondents were asked to identify the one factor they perceived was most helpful in preschool interagency collaboration. Written responses were categorized into ten descriptors. The number one factor cited by all four groups of respondents was networking with other persons or agencies. This finding has significant implications for school

district personnel and may represent the greatest challenge. School district personnel must network within the community and utilize the skills and knowledge base of other agencies and personnel in order to successfully collaborate in the implementation of P.L. 99-457. Secondly, all four groups indicated that commitment to collaborate and cooperate is also a critical factor. Networking efforts must be combined with a serious commitment to the process and experience of collaboration.

The next two factors cited as most helpful in successful preschool interagency collaboration were: 1) common goal/child-family focus, and 2) support services from technical assistance programs. The child-family focus seems closely linked with the factor of commitment to collaborate and cooperate. The role of support services from technical assistance programs suggests the critical need for continued and expanded programmatic support from federal, state and local resources and personnel.

These findings were uniform across all four respondent groups and this strengthens the notion that successful interagency collaboration requires a long-term commitment of time, purpose, personnel, and support services. School district personnel will benefit from training modules related to: 1) the identification of key individuals in the community who can provide leadership and networking skills, 2) establishment and maintenance of collaborative processes, and 3) identification of

support and technical assistance services at the local and state levels.

Key Factors for Collaboration

Respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which specific factors were essential for successful interagency collaboration using the following scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The mean score of each factor for the four groups of respondents are listed below.

TABLE 5.1

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR COLLABORATION
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Factors	Mean Scores
Development of common and comprehensive perspective and goals	4.52
Identification of needs and problems of children	*4.65
Understanding other agency's missions, etc.	4.35
Establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication	4.54
Knowledge of specific service and resource providers	*4.70
Involvement of key persons who are truly representative of community agencies	4.57
Development of a plan that facilitates interagency collaboration, direction, and movement	4.42

*Note: The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 5.2

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR COLLABORATION
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Factors	Mean Scores
Development of common and comprehensive perspective and goals	4.58
Identification of needs and problems of children	*4.69
Understanding other agency's missions, etc.	4.42
Establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication	4.66
Knowledge of specific service and resource providers	*4.70
Involvement of key persons who are truly representative of community agencies	4.67
Development of a plan that facilitates interagency collaboration, direction, and movement	4.49

*Note: The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 5.3

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR COLLABORATION
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Factors	Mean Scores
Development of common and comprehensive perspective and goals	4.26
Identification of needs and problems of children	4.37
Understanding other agency's missions, etc.	4.26
Establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication	*4.63
Knowledge of specific service and resource providers	*4.58
Involvement of key persons who are truly representative of community agencies	4.53
Development of a plan that facilitates interagency collaboration, direction, and movement	4.37

*Note: The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 5.4

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR COLLABORATION
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Factors	Mean Scores
Development of common and comprehensive perspective and goals	4.61
Identification of needs and problems of children	4.61
Understanding other agency's missions, etc.	4.43
Establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication	*4.73
Knowledge of specific service and resource providers	4.72
Involvement of key persons who are truly representative of community agencies	*4.74
Development of a plan that facilitates interagency collaboration, direction, and movement	4.58

*Note: The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - According to the data results, respondents indicated a "strong agreement" to "agreement" that all of the descriptors were keys to interagency collaboration. Although there was little deviation in the overall rating of the variables, the top four key factors to interagency collaboration for the identified groups included: 1) knowledge of specific service and resource providers; 2) identification of needs and problems of children; 3) establishment of a network to facilitate inter/inter-agency communication; and 4) involvement of key persons who are truly representative of community agencies. Both

the total group of respondents and the group indicating successful interagency collaboration agreed that the identification of needs and problems of children is important as well as what services are available to meet those needs. Both of these key factors to collaboration focus on recognizing and fulfilling the needs of the "consumer". Public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant/State Foundation Programs agreed that knowledge of specific service and resources providers is important, plus the establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication. Respondents with Ohio Curriculum training viewed the "persons" involved as the most important variable as well as the establishment of a network to facilitate inter/intra-agency communication. It would appear Ohio Curriculum respondents view key factors of collaboration relative to "people variables" as very important to the collaborative process.

Inhibiting Factors in Collaboration

Respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the following factors were inhibitors of preschool interagency collaborative efforts in their communities. Respondents used the following scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The mean scores of these factors are listed below for the four groups.

TABLE 6.1

INHIBITING FACTORS IN COLLABORATION
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Descriptors	Mean Scores
Unclear goals & objectives	3.77
Lack of communication between policy makers and service providers	*3.87
Lack of understanding of other agencies' policies	*3.88
Presence of agency "turf" issues	3.69
Lack of a plan for establishing an interagency committee	3.36
Lack of procedures for resolving conflicts	3.42
Lack of procedures for handling transitions and transfers	3.61
Lack of specific information needed by agencies to handle new referrals	3.57
Duplication of screening, diagnostics, and treatment	3.46
Gaps in screening and diagnostics services	3.77
Agency policies & regulations interfere with sharing parent/family information	3.62
Lack of guidance and direction at state level	3.69
Lack of personnel to participate in collaboration	3.52
Lack of time for collaboration efforts	*3.85
Lack of personnel with leadership skills	3.23
Lack of clear agency policies for the provision of services	3.37

* The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 6.2

INHIBITING FACTORS IN COLLABORATION
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Descriptors	Mean Scores
Unclear goals & objectives	3.57
Lack of communication between policy makers and service providers	3.62
Lack of understanding of other agencies' policies	*3.70
Presence of agency "turf" issues	3.66
Lack of a plan for establishing an interagency committee	3.04
Lack of procedures for resolving conflicts	3.25
Lack of procedures for handling transitions and transfers	3.56
Lack of specific information needed by agencies to handle new referrals	3.46
Duplication of screening, diagnostics, and treatment	3.35
Gaps in screening and diagnostics services	*3.67
Agency policies & regulations interfere with sharing parent/family information	3.55
Lack of guidance and direction at state level	3.57
Lack of personnel to participate in collaboration	3.29
Lack of time for collaboration efforts	*3.69
Lack of personnel with leadership skills	2.88
Lack of clear agency policies for the provision of services	3.06

* The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 6.3

INHIBITING FACTORS IN COLLABORATION
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Descriptors	Mean Scores
Unclear goals & objectives	3.67
Lack of communication between policy makers and service providers	3.67
Lack of understanding of other agencies' policies	3.67
Presence of agency "turf" issues	*3.94
Lack of a plan for establishing an interagency committee	3.50
Lack of procedures for resolving conflicts	3.39
Lack of procedures for handling transitions and transfers	3.53
Lack of specific information needed by agencies to handle new referrals	3.33
Duplication of screening, diagnostics, and treatment	3.39
Gaps in screening and diagnostics services	*3.78
Agency policies & regulations interfere with sharing parent/family information	3.22
Lack of guidance and direction at state level	3.67
Lack of personnel to participate in collaboration	3.11
Lack of time for collaboration efforts	*3.78
Lack of personnel with leadership skills	2.89
Lack of clear agency policies for the provision of services	3.39

* The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 6.4

INHIBITING FACTORS IN COLLABORATION
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Descriptors	Mean Scores
Unclear goals & objectives	3.51
Lack of communication between policy makers and service providers	3.56
Lack of understanding of other agencies' policies	3.71
Presence of agency "turf" issues	*3.90
Lack of a plan for establishing an interagency committee	3.08
Lack of procedures for resolving conflicts	3.42
Lack of procedures for handling transitions and transfers	3.62
Lack of specific information needed by agencies to handle new referrals	3.34
Duplication of screening, diagnostics, and treatment	3.41
Gaps in screening and diagnostics services	*3.72
Agency policies & regulations interfere with sharing parent/family information	3.67
Lack of guidance and direction at state level	3.64
Lack of personnel to participate in collaboration	3.25
Lack of time for collaboration efforts	*3.81
Lack of personnel with leadership skills	2.93
Lack of clear agency policies for the provision of services	3.05

* The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - Overall, the respondents rated the inhibitors between "agree" and "undecided". The top five inhibitors for the four groups included: 1) lack of time for collaboration efforts; 2) gaps in screening, diagnostics, and treatment services; 3) presence of agency "turf" issues; 4) lack of understanding of other agencies' policies; and 5) lack of communication between policy makers and service providers. The importance of the human element of interagency collaboration becomes apparent. Time is an essential component needed to develop inter/intra-agency interpersonal relationships necessary to ultimately develop understanding of other agencies' missions, policies, and services, which in turn, leads to the elimination of gaps in services for children and families. Even those respondents who reported successful interagency collaboration viewed lack of time, gaps in services, and lack of understanding of other agencies as major inhibitors to the collaborative process. The presences of agency "turf issues" appeared to be a concern to respondents from public schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs and to respondents with Ohio Curriculum training. One might speculate that the lack of clarity at the state level may contribute to the problem.

Inter/Intra-agency Communication

Respondents were asked to identify the activities that their agencies currently did to ensure inter/intra-agency communication regarding collaborative efforts. The respondents answers are

indicated by the following percentages for the four groups:

TABLE 7.1

INTER/INTRA-AGENCY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Communication Strategy	Percentage
Record & disseminate minutes of meetings	*39.3
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*35.3
Develop a brochure/directory	30.0
Develop a newsletter	3.7
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	23.3
Develop formal written interagency agreements	18.0
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	28.7

* The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

NOTE: The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated using more than one of the listed strategies.

TABLE 7.2

INTER/INTRA-AGENCY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Communication Strategy	Percentage
Record & disseminate minutes of meetings	*68.8
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*62.9
Develop a brochure/directory	53.6
Develop a newsletter	7.0
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	42.6
Develop formal written interagency agreements	35.5
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	53.9

* The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

NOTE: The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated using more than one of the listed strategies.

TABLE 7.3

INTER/INTRA-AGENCY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Public School with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Communication Strategy	Percentage
Record & disseminate minutes of meetings	*42.1
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*57.9
Develop a brochure/directory	36.8
Develop a newsletter	0.0
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	31.6
Develop formal written interagency agreements	36.8
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	36.8

* The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

NOTE: The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated using more than one of the listed strategies.

TABLE 7.4

INTER/INTRA-AGENCY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Communication Strategy	Percentage
Record & disseminate minutes of meetings	*81.2
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*70.6
Develop a brochure/directory	56.0
Develop a newsletter	8.1
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	49.4
Develop formal written interagency agreements	38.8
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	49.4

* The top two choices are denoted by an asterisk.

NOTE: The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated using more than one of the listed strategies.

Discussion - Respondents were asked to identify activities that their agencies currently did to ensure inter/intra-agency communication regarding preschool interagency collaborative efforts. All four groups of respondents identified recording and disseminating of minutes of meetings to be a critical activity. Indeed, this was the first choice of the total group of respondents, group indicating successful interagency collaboration, and the respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training. It was the second choice of the respondents from public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs.

Secondly, the four groups indicated that representatives reporting back at their agency's meetings was also a critical factor. These findings indicate that successful communication depends on specific procedures, such as record keeping and regular agency reporting to ensure effective collaboration.

Respondents indicated the extent to which they found each of these strategies helpful in communicating interagency activities using the following scale: 5 = Extremely Helpful, 4 = Helpful, 3 = Minimally Helpful, 2 = Not Helpful, and 1 = Don't Know. The mean scores of these responses for the four groups are as follows:

TABLE 8.1

HELPFULNESS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Communication Activities	Mean Score
Record and disseminate minutes of meetings	*3.81
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*3.64
Develop a brochure/directory	*3.61
Develop a newsletter	2.46
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	3.17
Develop formal written interagency agreements	3.21
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	3.51

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 8.2

HELPFULNESS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N =148)

Communication Activities	Mean Score
Record and disseminate minutes of meetings	*3.90
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	3.64
Develop a brochure/directory	*3.66
Develop a newsletter	2.44
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	3.25
Develop formal written interagency agreements	3.35
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	*3.68

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 8.3

HELPFULNESS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Communication Activities	Mean Score
Record and disseminate minutes of meetings	*3.67
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*3.77
Develop a brochure/directory	3.42
Develop a newsletter	1.92
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	2.54
Develop formal written interagency agreements	2.83
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	*3.50

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 8.4

HELPFULNESS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Communication Activities	Mean Score
Record and disseminate minutes of meetings	*4.18
Representatives report back at their agency's meetings	*3.80
Develop a brochure/directory	*3.57
Develop a newsletter	2.22
Present information regarding interagency collaborative activities at professional and parent meetings	3.24
Develop formal written interagency agreements	3.38
Develop informal spoken interagency agreements	3.37

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - Respondents were asked to rate these strategies as most helpful in communicating interagency activities. The mean scores of these responses indicated that recording and disseminating minutes of meetings was most helpful, followed by agency representatives reporting back to their agencies, and, finally, developing a brochure/directory containing specific information about the agency. A need for training on successful communication strategies is indicated by these findings.

Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Respondents were asked to identify the strategies that their agencies use to resolve conflicts as they engage in interagency

collaboration. The extent to which these strategies are used are indicated by the following percentages for the four groups of respondents:

TABLE 9.1

STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Total Group of Respondents (N =300)

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Percentage
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*34.3
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	7.3
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*30.3
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	24.7
Learn to compromise	28.3
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*34.0

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 9.2

STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N =148)

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Percentage
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*62.0
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	14.6
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*54.7
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	46.0
Learn to compromise	51.8
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*63.5

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 9.3

STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Public School with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Percentage
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*52.6
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	10.5
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*47.4
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	15.8
Learn to compromise	36.8
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*52.6

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 9.4

STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Percentage
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*60.0
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	14.1
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*62.4
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	40.0
Learn to compromise	47.1
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*60.0

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - When asked to identify the strategies that their agencies used to resolve conflicts as they engage in interagency collaboration, the top three strategies identified were as follows: (1) involve key players who are "child focused"; (2) communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues; and (3) elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner. Again, training needs are indicated in the area of conflict management and resolution. Leadership skills appear to be a critical factor in this area.

Respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which

the above conflict resolution strategies were helpful using the following scale: 5 = Extremely Helpful, 4 = Helpful, 3 = Minimally Helpful, 2 = Not Helpful, and 1 = Don't Know. The mean score of the strategies for the four groups are listed below.

TABLE 10.1

HELPFULNESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Conflict Resolution Strategies	Mean Scores
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*4.29
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	2.60
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*4.20
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	3.95
Learn to compromise	4.07
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*4.13

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 10.2

HELPFULNESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Conflict Resolution Strategies	Mean Scores
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*4.35
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	2.59
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*4.22
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	4.06
Learn to compromise	4.11
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*4.18

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 10.3

HELPFULNESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Conflict Resolution Strategies	Mean Scores
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*4.43
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	2.72
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*4.25
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	3.64
Learn to compromise	3.80
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*4.00

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

TABLE 10.4

HELPFULNESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Conflict Resolution Strategies	Mean Scores
Involve key players who are "child focused"	*4.19
Adopt "Robert's Rules of Order"	2.64
Elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner	*4.36
Employ procedures for problem solving strategy	3.80
Learn to compromise	4.07
Communicate our agency's policies and limitations to help others understand our position on issues	*4.14

*Note: The top three choices are denoted by an asterisk.

Discussion - Respondents indicated that the following conflict resolution strategies were most helpful: (1) involve key players who are "child focused"; (2) elect a committee/group chairperson who can conduct meetings in a fair manner; and (3) communicate agency policies and limitations to help others understand positions on issues. These responses reinforced the discussion related to leadership skills and the need for training in this area.

Identified Training Needs

In order to ascertain the training needs of the respondents, the respondents were asked to list their most critical needs regarding training in interagency collaboration to be provided by the State Department of Education. The written responses were

categorized into ten major training needs areas. The response percentages for the four groups are as follows:

TABLE 11.1

AREAS OF TRAINING NEEDS IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
Total Group of Respondents (N = 300)

Training Areas	Percentage
Inservice on state & federal guidelines, direction, & regulations	24.0
Inservice on child find, identification, assessment	5.0
Inservice on networking, system for information sharing, standard forms, etc.	15.0
Inservice on group process (problem-solving, conflict resolution, establishing collaboratives, interagency agreements)	23.0
System for referral & transition	5.0
Funding and grant procedures	6.0
Available information dissemination system (resources available, current research)	8.0
Inservice training for administrators and regular educators	7.0
Current certification standards from MRDD & DOE	1.0
Inservice on services and programs with regard to specific service mandates and models for rural, urban, & suburban areas	7.0

* The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated more than one training need.

TABLE 11.2

AREAS OF TRAINING NEEDS IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
Respondents Indicating Successful Collaboration (N = 148)

Training Areas	Percentage
Inservice on state & federal guidelines, direction, & regulations	25.0
Inservice on child find, identification, assessment	3.0
Inservice on networking, system for information sharing, standard forms, etc.	17.0
Inservice on group process (problem-solving, conflict resolution, establishing collaboratives, interagency agreements)	27.0
System for referral & transition	6.0
Funding and grant procedures	6.0
Available information dissemination system (resources available, current research)	4.0
Inservice training for administrators and regular educators	4.0
Current certification standards from MRDD & DOE	0.0
Inservice on services and programs with regard to specific service mandates and models for rural, urban, & suburban areas	7.0

* The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated more than one training need.

TABLE 11.3

AREAS OF TRAINING NEEDS IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
Public Schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and
State Foundation Programs (N = 19)

Training Areas	Percentage
Inservice on state & federal guidelines, direction, & regulations	31.0
Inservice on child find, identification, assessment	0.0
Inservice on networking, system for information sharing, standard forms, etc.	0.0
Inservice on group process (problem-solving, conflict resolution, establishing collaboratives, interagency agreements)	23.0
System for referral & transition	0.0
Funding and grant procedures	8.0
Available information dissemination system (resources available, current research)	8.0
Inservice training for administrators and regular educators	8.0
Current certification standards from MRDD & DOE	0.0
Inservice on services and programs with regard to specific service mandates and models for rural, urban, & suburban areas	23.0

* The above percentage does not equal 100% because agencies indicated more than one training need.

TABLE 11.4

AREAS OF TRAINING NEEDS IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
Respondents with Ohio Curriculum Training (N = 91)

Training Areas	Percentage
Inservice on state & federal guidelines, direction, & regulations	21.0
Inservice on child find, identification, assessment	3.0
Inservice on networking, system for information sharing, standard forms, etc.	14.0
Inservice on group process (problem-solving, conflict resolution, establishing collaboratives, interagency agreements)	28.0
System for referral & transition	3.0
Funding and grant procedures	8.0
Available information dissemination system (resources available, current research)	5.0
Inservice training for administrators and regular educators	5.0
Current certification standards from MRDD & DOE	1.0
Inservice on services and programs with regard to specific service mandates and models for rural, urban, & suburban areas	5.0

* The above percentage does not equal 100 percent because agencies indicated more than one training need.

Discussion - Respondents were asked to identify their most critical needs regarding interagency collaboration training to be provided by the Department of Education. The highest percentages

on training needs were in the following areas: (1) inservice on federal and state guidelines, directions and regulations; (2) inservice on group processes (problem-solving, conflict resolution, establishing collaboratives, and interagency agreements); and (3) inservice on networking and strategies for information sharing, standardized forms, and other means of formalizing agreements.

These findings are significant in that they reflect a need for more knowledge regarding regulations and guidelines, actual collaborative processes, and networking. These are critical components of the training to be conducted for school district personnel. The Ohio Curriculum can provide valuable assistance in these areas also.

IMPLICATIONS

The following discussion summarizes the survey results and presents recommendations for the development of the resource manual to be used for providing preschool interagency collaboration training for Ohio public school personnel.

1. Future training in interagency collaboration needs to focus on urban/suburban as well as rural areas. Data indicated that prior training and experience in preschool interagency collaboration in Ohio has been more common in rural areas. Special needs of urban/suburban areas must be distinguished from those of rural communities. These findings support the use of an initial needs assessment instrument by the school districts in their respective communities to determine strengths and needs.
2. Successful collaboration seems to be more prominent among MR/DD programs, Head Start programs, social services agencies, and public schools with Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs. As public schools meet the mandate of P.L. 99-457, interagency collaboration training needs to be targeted on representatives of programs that are less familiar with the collaboration process, such as day care centers, preschool/nursery school programs, and medical agencies.

3. Handicapped children ages 3-5 years are being served by diverse agencies and programs throughout Ohio. Preschool interagency collaboration training can be enhanced by the involvement of representatives of agencies who have experience in providing services for this population. Public schools, under the mandate P.L. 99-457, have the opportunity to serve in a facilitative and leadership role in providing this collaborative training.
4. According to the data, there appears to be a positive attitude toward preschool interagency collaboration in Ohio. Public schools with Preschool Incentive Grants and State Foundation Program (N = 19) reported a high level of successful interagency collaboration. The potential public school population is large and will benefit from the collaborative experiences of personnel of established Preschool Incentive Grant and State Foundation Programs.
5. Training modules should include group process skills and strategies, networking strategies, identification of resources, and group maintenance of the collaborative process. These factors were identified as the most helpful in successful interagency collaboration efforts.
6. In order for interagency collaboration to be

successful, it is essential that collaborators are aware of the potential inhibitors and possible strategies to prevent or resolve interagency collaboration process problems. Training modules need to focus on the identification of specific inhibitors and strategies for problem solving at all levels from administrative to program implementation. Turf issues can only be resolved if agencies can learn to openly discuss them and establish a problem-solving strategy so that a "win-win" situation can occur for agencies as well as consumers.

7. Intra- and inter-agency communication strategies are essential for successful collaboration to occur. Strategies from the Ohio Curriculum Training may be utilized, along with communication strategies that are suitable to the individual school district's setting and needs.
8. A training module on leadership skills that facilitates interagency collaboration is clearly indicated from the results of this survey. Specific skills to be addressed include conflict management and resolution as well as the ability to articulate an agency's policies and limitations. Possessing the ability to enhance the human factor in interagency collaboration appears to be a most critical factor in each interagency group's

efforts.

9. Training is indicated in the area of federal and state guidelines. Policy making at the federal level has been an evolution and many agencies at the local level await clearer understanding of the federal mandate, its implications at the state level, and how local agencies are to implement the law in a comprehensive and responsible way.
10. The Ohio Curriculum has developed quality materials in several areas which may be used in unison with training modules to be developed for school district personnel.

Recommendations for Training

1. Based on the literature review and survey findings, there are many quality training materials and modules for preschool interagency collaboration. For example, there are several Ohio Curriculum Training modules (i.e. Child Find, Screening and Assessment, Individual Program Plan) that would be helpful for Ohio public school personnel.
2. Based on survey findings, training needs still exist in several areas. Two training modlues should be developed and should include the follow:

   Module 1 - Administrative Handbook on Preschool Interagency Collaboration

   This module should include the following components:

A. State and federal guidelines and awareness information
B. Rational for school district involvement in interagency collaboration
C. Comprehensive assessment of school district's preschool special education needs
D. Determining training needs of school district personnel
E. Establishing a school district interagency collaboration team
F. Transitioning into early childhood programs
G. Family and parent involvement in the interagency collaboration process
H. References and glossary of terms

Module 2 - Group Process: Facilitating Preschool Interagency Collaboration

This module should include the following components:

A. Leadership skills
B. Group process and dynamics
C. Personal skill builders
D. Exercises, activities, and simulations
E. References and glossary of terms

3. Training should be targeted toward select school district personnel, collaboration team members, SERRC representatives, and others identified through the Ohio

Department of Education. Technical assistance at the state level is indicated to support training needs. The training of trainers model may be an appropriate means of providing initial training through contact personnel located in the sixteen SERRC's and with the assistance of an Early Childhood Specialist at the state level. These individuals, in turn, would be responsible for providing the training directly to public school personnel. This may involve a process of self-assessment and determination of needs. Such a system would recognize that public schools are at different levels of sophistication in preschool interagency collaboration. On-going technical assistance should be provided to SERRC and public school personnel by the Ohio Department of Education.

References

Audette, R. (1980). Interagency collaboration: The bottom line. In J. O. Elder & P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 25-34). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Baxter, J. M. (1982). Solving problems through cooperation. Exceptional Children, 48, 400-407.

Bertcher, H. J. (1979). Group participation techniques for leaders and members. Beverly Hills, CA: Saga Publications.

Crawford, C. O., & Leadley, S. M. (1978). Interagency collaboration for planning and delivery of health care. Adapted from Paper #5514 in the Journal Series of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station: Aspen Systems Corporation.

Davis, M. A. (1977). Looking at children: Identification, referral and assessment of children in a preschool special education setting. The Ochlocknee Project Model. Washington, DC: Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 155 866)

Elder, J. O. (1980). Essential components in development of interagency collaboration. In J. O. Elder and P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 181-201). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Elder, J. O. & Magrab, P. R. (1980). Coordinating services to handicapped children. Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Fitch, J. (1981). A personal touch in achieving interagency cooperation. In S. Threet and P. Hutinger, Interagency coordination: A necessity in rural programs. Making it work in rural communities. A Rural Network Monograph (pp. 38-44). Washington, DC: Office of Special Education (ED). (ERIC Reproduction Document Service No. ED 211 300)

Flynn, C. C., & Harbin, G. L. (1987). Evaluating interagency coordination efforts using a multidimensional, interactional, developmental paradigm. Remedial and Special Education, 8(3), 35-44.

Gans, S. P., & Horton, G. T. (1975). Integration of human services: The state and municipal levels. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.

Gilbert, N., & Specht, H. (1977). Quantitative aspects of social services coordination efforts: Is more better? Administrative Social Work, 53, 61.

Greene, G. A. (1985, October). Uniting school, community, industry, and public agencies in the rural community. Paper presented at the meeting of the Annual Rural Education Association Conference, Cedar Rapids, IA.

Greene, J. D., & Pirtle, R. (1982). Facilitating linking between Head Start and public school special education programs. Paper presented at the Meeting of the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Houston, TX. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 235 607)

Hall, H. (1980). The intangible human factor: The most critical coordination variable. In J. O. Elder and P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp.45-62). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Hanson, M. J. (1985). Administration of private versus public early childhood special education programs. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 5, 25-38.

Helge, D. I. (1980). National comparative study regarding rural special education delivery systems before and after passage of P.L. 94-142. Murray, KY: Center for Innovation and Development, Murray State University.

Humm-Delgado, D. (1980). Planning issues in local interagency collaboration. In J. O. Elder & P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 163-178). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Hutinger, P. L., & Smith-Dickson, B. J. (1985). Creating and maintaining a rural networking system. Macomb, IL: Western Illinois University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 287 640)

Johnson, H. W., McLaughlin, J.A., & Christensen, M. (1982). Interagency collaboration: Driving and restraining forces. Exceptional Children, 48, 395-399.

Kazuk, E. (1980). Development of a community-based interagency model. In J. O. Elder & P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 99-132). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Magrab, P., Kazuk, E., & Greene, L. (1981). Community workbook for collaborative services to preschool handicapped children. Washington, DC: American Association of University Affiliated Programs.

Magrab, P., & Schmidt, L. (1980). Interdisciplinary collaboration: A prelude to coordinated service delivery. In J. O. Elder & P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 13-24). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Martinson, M. (1982). Interagency services: A new era for an old idea. Exceptional Children, 48, 389-394.

Morse, M. T. (1981). Interagency coordination: An overview. In S. Threet and P. Hutinger, Interagency coordination: A necessity in rural programs. Making it work in rural communities. A Rural Network Monograph (pp. 1-6). Washington, DC: Office of Special Education (ED). (ERIC Reproduction Document Service No. ED 211 300)

Mulvenon, J. (1980). Development of preschool interagency teams. In J. O. Elder & P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 133-162). Baltimore, MA: Brookes Publishing Company, Inc.

Olsen, K. R. (1983). Obtaining related services through local interagency collaboration. Lexington, KY: Mid-South Regional Resource Center.

Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. (1987). Organizing and planning local collaborative early intervention services: A guide to action planning. The Ohio Curriculum Project. Columbus, OH: Author.

Regional Resource Center Task Force on Interagency Collaboration. (1979). Interagency collaboration on full services for handicapped children and youth: A guide to local implementation. Washington, DC: DHEW, Office of Education for the Handicapped.

Steingraph, H. (1977). Interorganizational theory and practice: interpretation and annotation. Austin, TX: The University of Texas.

Threet, S., & Hutinger, P. (1981). Interagency coordination: A necessity in rural program. Making it work in rural communities. A Rural Network Monograph. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education (ED). (ERIC Reproduction Document Service No. ED 211 300)

Toole, A. L. (Ed.). (1982). Standards for excellence: Recommendations for preschool special education in New York State. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS).

Weintraub, F. J. (1968). Preparation of special education personnel, new directions and opportunities. Proceedings of a Conference on the Education Professions Development Act and Its Applicability to Special Education. Washington, DC: Council for Exceptional Children. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 019 527)

Ysseldyke, J. E., Thurlow, M. L., O'Sullivan, P., & Bursaw, R. A. (1985). Current screening and diagnostic practices for identifying young handicapped children. Early childhood Assessment Project Research Report #2. Washington, DC: Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 269 951)

Zeller, R. (1980). Direction service: Collaboration one case at a time. In J. O. Elder and P. R. Magrab (Eds.), Coordinating services to handicapped children (pp. 65-97). Baltimore, MA: Brooks Publishing Company, Inc.